United Nations

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean

18 July 2007

General Assembly
Official Records
Sixty-second Session
Supplement No. 29 (A/62/29)

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Chapter I
Introduction

1. By its resolution 60/48, the General Assembly, after taking note of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean,[1] requested the Chairman of the Committee to continue his informal consultations with the members of the Committee and to report through the Committee to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.

2. Pursuant to that resolution, the Committee held its formal session (452nd meeting) on 18 July 2007 at United Nations Headquarters. The Chairman also held a number of consultations and meetings during 2007.

3. At the 452nd meeting, on 18 July, the following delegations made statements in the general discussion under agenda item 3: Australia, Indonesia and Pakistan.

4. The Committee is composed of the following States:

(a) 43 members:

Australia
Bangladesh
Bulgaria
Canada
China
Djibouti
Egypt
Ethiopia
Germany
Greece
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Iraq
Italy
Japan
Kenya
Liberia
Madagascar
Malaysia
Maldives
Mauritius
Mozambique
Netherlands
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Panama
Poland
Romania
Russian Federation
Seychelles
Singapore
Somalia
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Thailand
Uganda
United Arab Emirates
United Republic of Tanzania
Yemen
Zambia
Zimbabwe

(b) Observers:

Nepal
South Africa
Sweden

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 29* (A/60/29).

5. The elected officers of the Committee were as follows:

Chairman:
Prasad Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka)

Vice-Chairmen:
Ben Milton (Australia)
Adam M. Tugio (Indonesia)
Filipe Chidumo (Mozambique)

Rapporteur:
Modeste Randrianarivony (Madagascar)

Chapter II
Work of the Committee in 2007

A. Agenda of the Committee

6. At its 452nd meeting, on 18 July, the Committee adopted the agenda as contained in document A/AC.159/L.137, which read as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Report of the Chairman of the Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 60/48.
4. Report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.
5. Other matters.

B. Report of the Chairman of the Committee

7. At its 452nd meeting, on 18 July, the Committee considered its agenda item 3 concerning the report of the Chairman of the Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 60/48. The Chairman made the following comprehensive statement on his consultations:

> "The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean last reported to the Assembly at the sixtieth session of the Assembly, in 2005, in accordance with its mandate. The Ad Hoc Committee is meeting today in keeping with General Assembly resolution 60/48, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace", in which the Assembly requested the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee to report through the Committee to the Assembly at its sixty-second session.
>
> "As you are aware, over the years, despite sustained efforts, this Committee has not been able to reach agreement on ways and means of implementing the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. This does not mean, however, that the objectives of the Declaration or what was envisioned by the Declaration have ceased to have validity or meaning. The Declaration's vision was to create the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace to ensure that the peoples of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean may resolve their political, economic and social problems under conditions of peace and tranquillity while preserving their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is a vision which continues to endure and is even increasingly relevant.
>
> "Since the adoption of the Declaration in 1971, however, the world, in a geopolitical and strategic sense, has undergone many changes. The world has seen the end of super-power rivalry, which has had its impact on the Indian Ocean Zone as well. This rivalry was a source of disquiet at the time and is no more relevant in that context.

"In the meantime, as positive developments, the Indian Ocean Zone has seen the rise of several cooperative initiatives emanating from the region aimed at bringing about socio-economic development in the countries of the region on the basis of economic, technical and scientific cooperation. However, the world has also seen the rise of new security concerns and compulsions which have an impact on the region. Terrorism has today become a universal threat which transcends boundaries of States and regions, affecting the lives of people in the furthest corners of the world. The Indian Ocean Zone is not immune to this menace, which threatens the ability of States in this Zone to address political, economic and social problems under conditions of peace and security. It is also apparent that disarmament and arms control efforts in the region have lagged behind.

"When the Declaration is viewed against this backdrop, one cannot ignore that the Ad Hoc Committee is in fact the only United Nations body of its kind that has the capacity to address security issues affecting the region in a broader sense involving all interrelated aspects and issues. It may, therefore be useful for members of the Ad Hoc Committee, as we have been unable to find agreement on how to implement the Declaration, to consider other options too. For instance, in the context of the ongoing United Nations reform process, it may be possible to consider exploring a new approach to the scope of the work of the Committee. This could even involve consideration of revision of the Declaration in an appropriate manner to bring the Declaration into line with current realities and needs. However, such an approach needs further broader consultations among the States of the region and those outside which retain an abiding interest in the region.

"In view of the complexities and difficulties involved in the implementation of the Declaration, as well as the evolving security compulsions and strategic scenario in the region, it is apparent that more time will be needed before we could embark on any discussion on practical measures to ensure peace and stability in the Indian Ocean in line with the 1971 Declaration or its possible derivative.

"However, there is no provision for another meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee to be held to discuss aspects of our mandate further in order to make the Declaration useful and relevant to the present day. Nevertheless, the opportunity exists for the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee to conduct informal consultations with a view to putting forward, at a future date, suitable proposals to make the Committee a more useful body of the United Nations, with a view to contributing to peace and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region in the long term.

"In the circumstances, the members of the Ad Hoc Committee may consider recommending that the General Assembly allow additional time for consultations as to how measures envisaged in the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace could be considered in a more focused manner and allow the Chairman of the Committee more time to continue his consultations."

8. During the meeting, an exchange of views was held on, inter alia, the work of the Committee.

9. The Committee reaffirmed the conclusions it had reached during its 1994, 1995 and 1996 sessions and emphasized the need to foster consensual, step-by-step approaches, particularly given the propitious international climate, which was conducive to the pursuit of such endeavours. The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to the realization of the goals of peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region.

10. The Committee remained convinced that the participation of all the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users in the work of the Committee was important and would assist the progress of a mutually beneficial dialogue aimed at developing conditions of peace, security and stability in the region.

C. Recommendations

11. The Chairman was requested to continue informal consultations with the members of the Committee and to report through the Committee to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

D. Adoption of the report of the Committee

12. At its 452nd meeting, on 18 July, the Rapporteur of the Committee introduced its draft report.

13. At the same meeting, the Chairman informed the members of the Committee of his intention to hold informal consultations concerning the text of the draft resolution to be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.

14. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted its report.

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